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Wild ways
Connecting with kids on March break.
Page 6.

New life soon
The much-needed facelift for downtown
is a step closer. Page 12.

Stigma removal
Campaign to get rid of mental illness
stigma. Page 11.

Prayer for sailors
Annual event held before shipping sea-
son begins. Page 13.

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INPORT NEWS

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BUDGET

Township tax rate set

DAVE JOHNSON
InPort News Staff

WAINFLEET — Roads were the hot topic again as Wainfleet aldermen went over the township's 2011 budget.

Budget deliberations took two-and-a-half hours last week as council set the tax rate for this year.

See BUDGET | page 2

See Inside:
INSERTS
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HEALTH CARE: Scholfield fights for system



ALLAN BENNER Staff Photo

Pat Scholfield has been actively involved in community efforts to preserve hospital services since 2006. After watching services at Port Colborne hospital slowly removed over decades, she's concerned the same thing could happen in Welland.

'You can't cave in'

ALLAN BENNER
InPort News Staff

POR T COLBORNE — In 1966, 10 years after Pat Scholfield moved to Port Colborne from her hometown of East Aurora, N.Y., medicare was adopted across Canada, a system she was very proud of.

"I was so proud of the health-care system over here, and I tell my old friends down in the States what a great health-care system we've got," she said.

And it's a system worth fighting to preserve, because slowly and surely, she fears it's being taken away.

She gave birth to three children at the Port Colborne hospital, and returned in 1985

to be at her daughter's side when physicians delivered her granddaughter there through Cesarean section.

"The hospital was functioning well up until then," she said.

However, in the 1990s, things quietly started to change. Years before the hospitals of the region were amalgamated into the Niagara Health System (NHS), services in Port Colborne's hospital were eliminated, services such as the obstetrics department that brought her grandchild into the world a few years earlier.

But that was only the beginning of the changes that were to come.

See SCHOLFIELD | page 2

THE SPRING MARKET HAS ARRIVED!

Facts from 2010 to consider before selecting a Port Colborne Real Estate sales representative to buy or sell YOUR home

- ROYAL LEPAGE NIAGARA REAL ESTATE CENTRE represented over 55% of all PC, residential sales
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* 2010 MLS Residential Transactions as reported by the Niagara Association of Realtors

Health system fighter wrote many letters

FROM PAGE 1

In about 2006, Scholfield said she started hearing about the new hospital being built in St. Catharines. She said it was initially proposed as a hospital to replace the aging facilities serving the people of St. Catharines.

At the time, however, Scholfield started reading letters to the editor written by "knowledgeable people" who said the new hospital would ultimately end up being a regional facility and should therefore be located in the geographic centre of Niagara.

"I thought that makes a lot of sense. I thought we just have to convince those people they're on the wrong track and to change it."

She started researching the topic and learning as much as she could about the plans for the facility.

"I wrote letters everywhere.

I wrote them to the minister of health, to the MPPs, everyone. I wrote to the government on Denison St. In Welland. They didn't want to convince I was on the right track, that they should reverse the decision to locate the hospital in west St. Catharines.

Her efforts drew the attention of health system administrators who invited her to meet with them, but ultimately the decision was made to build the hospital on Fourth Ave. in St. Catharines.

When the Hospital Improvement Plan (HIP) was released a few years later, Scholfield stepped up her efforts to preserve hospital services, fearing the changes the document would bring about.

In her opinion, the changes such as converting Port Colborne's emergency department into an urgent-care centre have reduced the hospital to little more than a seniors home.

In October, Pat and John

Scholfield sold their Port Colborne home and moved to Welland. They are currently on the core services provided in Welland, Scholfield said.

"The physicians themselves in their reports have said if you lose those services, basically you'll lose the viability of a 24/7 ER," Scholfield said.

Ultimately, without a viable emergency department, she said she fears the Welland hospital will be left without another urgent-care centre just like the one in Port Colborne. "And I don't think the Welland people know that."

Scholfield has been working to make sure Welland people know what's at stake. She's asked city council to help get that message out to residents. City council agreed and a brochure is being developed outlining the changes planned for the local hospital.

Impact on Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Fort Erie since the hospital moved to Welland is on the core services provided in Welland, Scholfield said.

"The physicians themselves in their reports have said if you lose those services, basically you'll lose the viability of a 24/7 ER," Scholfield said.

Ultimately, without a viable emergency department, she said she fears the Welland hospital will be left without another urgent-care centre just like the one in Port Colborne. "And I don't think the Welland people know that."

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Scholfield's faced a fair bit of frustration in her efforts so far.

Despite the work of research, dozens if not hundreds of letters she's sent, protests and rallies she's participated in and helped organize, she's watched the changes she's fought against implemented. And she's seen the impact those changes have had on the community.

Despite her frustration, Scholfield said a sense of peace keeps her going. "It's the calls she gets from people who share stories with her of problems they've faced trying to get the medical care they need."

Scholfield said there's a fair bit of apathy in the community among people who feel "there's nothing they can do about it."

But she's not giving up.

"You can't cave in like that, you really can't. If it's some-

thing that serious, people have to say 'No, we're just not going to take it.'

Sie said people need to "wake up" and realize what they stand to lose. They need to convince the provincial government to preserve hospital services before it's too late.

"They have review the HIP and make necessary adjustments to accommodate people in the southern tier. We're hopeful that now that the government has been elected, they have an investigation into the NHS and the HIP (Health Minister Deb Matthews) will realize they have to review this plan and make adjustments."

If the provincial government won't make adjustments, "we have to have someone else in power."

"We have to have someone who recognizes what's happening to us down here."

abenner@wellandtribune.ca

BUDGET

Part of tax increase is because of extra funds put into arena fire code updates

FROM PAGE 1

Wainfleeters will see a municipal tax increase of 2.96% in 2011, which is \$87.83 on an average home assessed at \$208,625. That's up from last year's increase and the original figure of 2.64% council set two weeks ago.

Part of the increase comes from extra funds put into fire code upgrades for Wainfleet. A new fire code, which originally set aside \$50,000 to take of fire upgrades, but decided to add another \$90,000 to bring the total to \$140,000 for this

year. The arena needs about \$450,000 in fire and building code upgrades.

Before those figures were discussed, three residents from O'Reilly's Road appeared before council to ask council to reconsider a decision not to pave the road this

year. The road had been on the budget when it was first proposed, but council decided not to work on other roads in the township to be done.

The residents each said a letter of commitment had been provided to them by Greg Wulman, the township's director operations, last year that said their road would be paved this year. The road stretches between Lambert and Parks Roads.

They said council should stick to the commitment as there are now 20 homes on the road.

Ald. Ted Hessel told the residents he was opposed to the road being paved since last April.

Mayor Jeffs said despite the letter, the previous council never approved the road being paved.

One resident said council should let staff do its job

when it comes to figuring out what roads need to be fixed and stop micromanaging them.

"Roads are such a big part of a budget, I do think council as a whole needs to look them. It's our duty to look through them and discuss what needs to take a priority," said Jeffs in response.

Roads to be fixed this year, many along the lakeshore area which have been fixed in years include: Augustus, Wainfleet, Shuter, Sanderson and Dreamland, First and Second, Fowler, Collins and

Clarendon St. Council also discussed which roads to hire a part-time deputy fire chief at a cost of \$16,000 for 2011, with the position becoming full-time next year.

Fire chief Chris Cole said he's very busy and could use the help to take care of various programs the department runs and dealing with things like the arena. Council decided to put together a deputy chief and split the \$16,000, with half going into a reserve and the other going into fire code deficiencies at the arena.

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portraits



Dave Johnson Staff Photo
Sydney Skotniski skates around Westside Arena during a free family skate sponsored by Sobeys in Port Colborne.



Dave Johnson Staff Photo
Alyssa Hoyle skates around Westside Arena during a free family skate sponsored by Sobeys in Port Colborne.



Dave Johnson Staff Photo
Sierra Skotniski skates around Westside Arena during a free family skate sponsored by Sobeys in Port Colborne.

Let's skate



Dave Johnson Staff Photo
Sisters Sydney and Sierra Skotniski skate around Westside Arena during a free family skate sponsored by Sobeys in Port Colborne.

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ourview

Canal is important

Tuesday saw the Welland Canal open for another season of shipping and we're glad to see it, despite the fact it sometimes looks like a series of bridges in town.

Port Colborne held two ceremonies at the start of the season, the first being the annual Mariners Celebration at St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church.

Two hundred people came out for the hour-long event to offer up prayers for those who work in the marine industry. Before Rev. Robert Hurkmans offered a prayer for those in the industry, bagpiper Terry Dyson played outside the church and dancer Christie Boychuck performed *The Sailors' Hornpipe*. Also performing were the Ancient Mariners and a collection of singers from various church choirs in Port Colborne and Wainfleet. Rev. Bell, of Love Lake, Praying, a shipping company based in Port Dover, explained what various flags hung around the church, on Charlotte St., meant. It was a good celebration and one that more people in town should attend.

During the event, Bell said, "Port Colborne wouldn't be Port Colborne if it wasn't for the Seaway."

And he's right, without the Welland Canal and St. Lawrence Seaway, Port Colborne would be a far different city today.

If there was no canal, businesses such as ADM (formerly Maple Leaf Mills), Goderich Elevators (formerly the Government Elevators), Robin Hood, Cascos, Jungmuzlauer and Vale (formerly Inco), might have never located in Port Colborne.

Without some of the businesses, there wouldn't have been various others that supply the ones listed above.

Major Vance Badaway's family may have never even come to the city and started up their company which today supplies the marine industry. Places like Allied Marine, West Pier Marine and Industry Supply and Fraser Marine and Industrial, to name a few, might also not exist.

Think of all the jobs that would have never existed without the canal.

The canal's actual canal, St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp., and all of the shipping companies. People in Port Colborne work for the Seaway and various shipping companies, like Algoma and Canadian Steamship Lines.

Not only does the canal provide direct employment, but it also provides indirect employment to companies in town and across Niagara.

The canal is in fact important to Niagara overall.

It provides direct and indirect employment for thousands of people and generates millions that go into the region's economy.

So when a bridge goes up, don't curse it, think of what it means to Port Colborne, Niagara, Ontario and the country as a whole to have that ship passing underneath.

I'VE BEEN THINKING

About darkness and light

REV. STEVEN DAVIS
Central United Church

The scenes of devastation are overwhelming. As I write this, it's almost a week since the massive earthquake struck Japan, and after a week Japan still seems to be a nation dazed and in chaos, not sure what's happened or why and not sure how to move on.

I watched the news reports that included video of cars and homes being swiped away, children as if they were toys, and entire buildings being carried out to sea; other buildings being crumbled and in ruins because of the shock of the earthquake. As I write this, thousands are believed to be dead and tens of thousands are homeless.

Several nuclear reactors appear to be at the verge of catastrophic meltdowns and because so much of Japan's electricity comes from nuclear power, there are rolling blackouts even in Tokyo and many people are facing freezing temperatures with little or no shelter or heat.

The truth is that devastation is too mild a word for it. And, of course, it's happened before.

The tsunami off Indonesia a few years ago, Hurricane Katrina that devastated New Orleans, the massive earthquake that shattered Haiti just over a year ago. And of course there have been man-made disasters as well. Who can forget the harrowing scenes of 9/11, or the

terror caused by the London subway bombing of 2005 or various and sundry other examples of man-made or natural disasters. And we've all had to deal with personal devastation from time to time – anything from the loss of a job to the loss of a friend or loved one. Such things happen all too regularly, and always we find ourselves asking – "Why? Why does a good God allow such things to happen?"

Why? I ask that question too. When faced with catastrophic events on either a personal or global scale, I want to know "Why?"

In my calmer moments, when the catastrophe hasn't happened to me but I'm speaking with someone who's affected by it directly or emotionally, I'd be quite capable of spouting all sorts of theological and doctrinal jargon that can explain that "all things work together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose" – but sometimes I just can't get past the whose whose whose are in me and whose fears and anger are clearly concealed beneath the surface. And as much as I know about Scripture and as capable as I am of quoting it, in the end, when faced with tragedy of any kind and with the "why?" question that's inevitably raised, I guess I have to answer honestly: "I really don't know."

Jesus didn't really address the issue of why these terrible things happen. He acknowledged them, but offered no explanation. He once spoke of a tower that had fallen and had apparently

killed several people – but he offered no explanation for why it happened. Instead he offered a question: "Don't you think that the one who deserved it?" he seemed to say. They weren't being punished. Apparently, even in the eyes of Jesus, sometimes bad things just happen.

Life's not fair sometimes. Who could argue that? But if, indeed, somehow God caused good to come out of the bad things that happen, then maybe we need to look for it, and to let the light of the good shine through the darkness of the bad.

Always in response to natural disasters, people respond generously. Money is donated, volunteers line up to go abroad and help, prayers are offered, victims are not forgotten. When a friend or loved one dies, people help out, they offer sympathy and support, they bring food without being asked and they offer hugs – all this to show their love and caring.

These are good things in a time of darkness. We should all know the darkness to overcome those wonderful signs of light that we can see. A colleague of mine once said – "Life's not fair, but God is still good." I've found over the years that those words are true. Life really isn't fair, but God really is good.

Rather than giving up on God in despair over the darkness we see in the world, perhaps we should strive to be the lights to the world Jesus calls us to be. Find someone in need, or some situation you can make a contribution to – and then make a difference.

readers' views

STILL BEHIND EUROPE

Michael Den Tandt recently made what seems to be a valid point: if there is 40 years' study evidence that windpower is harmless, why put a moratorium on off-shore wind power?

It's further away from the population and you won't be able to hear them due to the distance, wind and waves.

Is it the depth and size of foundation required to keep these giants upright in turbulent wave and storms? If the real reason stems from the visual impact from the cottage owners point of view, then it's unmetched. Let's have a look at the lake, they are simply white sticks with a wave from the shore, in no way offensive to the eye.

Master of fact, I can see them as a topic of conversation for the cottage-owners and their guests sitting on the patio. At least something is moving, other than the trees, gulls and mosquitoes. Let's be thankful our provincial

government had the guts and foresight to jump-start clean energy conversion, something the federal government is still not catching on to.

Would that the people would wake up and realize that we are squandering our future and that of our children.

Doris Toepp
Port Colborne

OPEN LETTER TO THE NIAGARA REGIONAL COUNCIL AND NEDC

I have been reading of the ongoing discussions regarding whether or not the NEDC should continue in its present form with some interest. As a regional taxpayer I have many concerns about just how my tax dollars appear to be so easily spent by those who appear to accept little or no accountability?

A first question that has not been asked,

and which I believe is absolutely essential to assess the ongoing value of the NEDC to the Niagara Region in the past five years?

How many new jobs have been created in the Niagara Region in the past five years? How many new jobs have been created in the Niagara Region in the past five years that are directly attributable to NEDC initiatives?

Don't misunderstand me, I am not doubting the value of any single new job being created in the Niagara during these tough economic times. For those lucky enough to get one it is great, possibly a welcome relief.

However, I am not convinced that the implication of jobs at any tax dollar price, particularly when it has increasing tax dollars as it's only financial "business plan" budget requirements, makes any sense at all.

Andrew Watts
Wainfleet

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■ COLUMN

Working dogs of group No. 3 – The most popular breeds



Sandie Bingley
ITSA
DOGS/LIFE

One of the most popular breeds from Group 3 is the Rottweiler. The Rottweiler came to Germany with the invasion of the ancient Roman army. The Romans needed to drive and guard the sheep and cattle needed to feed these huge armies. Many of these dogs were left behind in various countries along the way. Some of these dogs were left in the German towns of Rottweil where many butchers and cattle buyers lived. Here the Rottweiler was

developed into excellent cattle dogs, draft dogs, guard dogs and even water dogs. Rottweiler's are very much around us today. No one would attempt to steal the money from the Rottweilers. Once all cattle was moved by trains it then became illegal to move cattle using dogs in Germany.

The Rottweiler would have been born out of work except that in 1910 it was chosen as one of only four breeds of dogs that could be used for the do police work. The Rottweiler with its intelligence, sturdy build, courage and self-reliance was perfect for police dogs. Today they make faithful home and family guard dogs and great companions.

Around 1890 Louis Dobermann was the local tax collector and dog catcher.

Because of his jobs were unpleasant and unpopular, he had to find a breed of dog so he developed a breed of dog that could protect him and also be light weight and agile. He kept it a secret as to which breeds of dogs he used to develop the Doberman Pinscher.

It is only guess but it is believed that he used the Rottweiler, the Great Dane, the German Shepherd Dog, the English Bulldog, the Manchester Terrier and the Greyhound to develop the Dobe. As the dog catcher he had easy access to get these breeds. With his Doberman Pinschers for protection he was then able to go from house to house and collect the taxes without being harmed.

In 1910 the Doberman Pinscher was named the 2nd breed of dog to be used to be used as a police dog in Germany. They were noted for being a fearless guard, police and war dog. Today he is obedient, loyal, and has controlled guarding abilities. He still has great energy so he needs lots of exercise and obedience training.

The very popular Great Dane is easy to recognize. He is quite tall at 31 inches at the shoulder. In spite of his size, he is still very elegant. He was known as the "dog of many

names" as he had about 10 different names depending on where he lived. In Germany he was known as the Deutsche Doggen (German Dog). In Denmark he was the Danois Doggen (Danish Dog). In parts of Europe he was called the Boarhund (Boar Dog). He lived for centuries in Britain where he was called the Great Dane.

It is still a mystery why he was called the Great Dane by the British as he was never a highly popular dog in Denmark. In Germany he was used

The very popular Boxer suddenly appeared around 1900. He was developed as a police dog in Germany. They were known as the Deutsche Doggen (German Dog). In Denmark he was the Danois Doggen (Danish Dog). In parts of Europe he was called the Boarhund (Boar Dog). He lived for centuries in Britain where he was called the Great Dane.

He has a very unique head with a longer lower jaw which looks a little like a Bulldog. But that is where the resemblance ends as the Boxer is medium in size, with a slim body and long legs.

Next time: More Group 3 Working dogs from other countries.

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■ BREAK

Mmmm, pancakes

FROM PAGE 6

Everyone was excited this particular Thursday because the next day — Friday, the final day of camp — was going to be a time for pancakes. But not just any pancakes. Laura and the campers had tapped maple trees on the property for sap earlier in the week. They were going to turn the sap into maple syrup on Friday and have the homemade concoction with their pancakes.

Camp Wild is an incredible experience for kids, especially in this day and age of everything online. Communing with nature almost seems to have gone out of style and I just find it so heartwarming to know we're blessed to have someone like Laura committed to getting kids out from behind computer screens and into the outdoors.

See OUTDOORS | page 8



GEORGE DUMA InPort News Photo

Laura Bearss and Caleb Shea check out the sap-collecting cans on one of the maple trees at Camp Wild. The day after this photo was taken, the collected sap would be turned into maple syrup for a pancake feast.

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■ OUTDOORS

Teaching is clearly in Laura's blood

FROM PAGE 7

Her background is eclectic. Laura studied Chemical and Environmental Engineering at Mohawk

College in Hamilton before furthering her education with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology at Brock University.

After a stint working for Toyota, she moved back to town about five years ago from Kitchener and launched Camp Wild.

Laura continued her education, getting her teacher's degree at Brock. During the fall, winter and spring months, she is a

supply teacher with the District School Board of Niagara, before kicking off her camp full-time in the summer.

After watching her work with kids on two separate occasions, it's a mystery to me why the school board hasn't taken her on full-time. Teaching is clearly in her blood and she would be such an incredible asset to the board and her knowledge of nature and the environment.

If you have young children, I would wholeheartedly recommend sending them to learn with Laura this summer. And don't be surprised if they end up wanting to sign up for subsequent weeks. Most do. And I totally understand why.

For more information, check out Laura's website for Camp Wild at www.campwild.ca.

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GEORGE DUMA

InPort News

Eric Birrell was so excited to show me a coyote skull the campers at Camp Wild found during one of their hikes. It was pretty cool. I guess they saw the coyote's dead body last summer during a hike and found the skull during last week's March break.

comments and column
suggestions and can be
reached at: gduma@coeca.ca

inPortbriefs

APPEAL MOVES FORWARD

PORT COLBORNE — An Ontario Municipal Board pre-hearing conference has been scheduled for the appeal filed by Nyon Oil Inc. regarding the proposed energy park in Port Colborne.

The appeal was filed based on the city's decision to deny requested city official plan and zoning changes for the energy park in June 2008. The hearing is Wednesday, April 6, in city council chambers. It starts 11 a.m.

The city's legal counsel met with Nyon representatives on March 11, chief administrative officer Bob Hell told city council last week.

A revised site plan for the energy park is in the works, he said. Liquidated natural gas and polymer storage components have been removed.

Another meeting will take place on March 28 between city representatives and counsel

After that meeting, the city may be able to provide the public with more information, Hell said.

It is anticipated, he said, that a full OMB hearing will take place in the next four to eight months.

NIAGARA MUSIC AWARDS JUNE 14

THOROLD — The big night for local musicians is less than three months away.

The 2011 Niagara Music Awards takes place June 14, when music fans will find out who the winners are of such awards as male and female vocalists of the year, rock group of the year, and more.

But before awards night, there's an event launch and news conference scheduled for March 31 at The Moose and Goose in Thorold.

Tickets for the event are \$5. Angela Siracus will provide the entertainment.

■ NEED THERE: Residents will benefit

Bus route altered in Apollo Dr. area

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — City council is retreating for residents.

After being reviewed by the transit advisory committee, a bus route in the Apollo Dr. area has been changed to benefit residents living in subsidized housing.

The review request was brought forward by Ward 3 Coun. Bea Kenny, who had been approached by area residents unable to access

public transportation.

"There is a need there," Kenny told councilors last week, adding that some people are unable to afford other methods of transportation.

The transit advisory committee recommended the bus be rerouted for a two-month trial period.

It will turn right onto Borden Ave. from Steele St., left onto Elm St. and then left on Barrick Rd.

The bus will stop at the corner of Barrick and Apollo, within walking distance of the subdivision in question. It

will then continue on Barrick, turning left onto Steele, and right onto Northland Ave.

There is no change to existing service and only a small portion of Steele St. between Borden and Northland will be omitted.

There is no cost to the change in the route.

Community and corporate services director Peter Senechal said the change has been advertised on city buses, www.portcolborne.ca and at city hall.

Notices are also being sent out in water bills of area

homes this week, he said. Kenny was unsure whether all residents in subsidized housing would be water-billed and suggested another method is necessary to communicate the change.

She said she and Ward 3 councillor Frank Danch are willing to take a walk through the subdivision and hand out notices.

Seneschal responded, saying staff can deliver the notices to homes in the neighbourhood.

mfirth@wellandtribune.ca

Stressed? What? Me Worry?

Job pressures, family responsibilities, crushing financial worries, constant rushing to and fro in traffic and "there's never enough time in the day," anxieties are just a few of our many, many daily stresses.

Unfortunately, stress is a killer. Stress has been linked to the five leading causes of death - heart disease, cancer, lung disease, accidents and liver disease. Research shows that almost 90% of all illness is linked to stress and 75-90% of all visits to the doctor are for stress and anxiety-related concerns.

And here on the Niagara Peninsula, we seem to have our own set of worries... ongoing plant closures, inflation, more and more traffic, food prices rising - is it me, or does it just never seem to end?

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■ PATHSTONE: Council hears youth need help

Campaign to remove mental illness stigma

MARYANNE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COLBORNE — Ellis Katsos is hoping the people of Port Colborne will help to break the stigma that surrounds mental health treatment.

The executive director of Pathstone Mental Health, formerly Niagara Child and

Youth Services, shared information about the agency with Port Colborne council last week.

One in five children will face a mental illness, as will one in five adults, Katsos said.

"That's twice the amount of people that have diabetes and four times the number of women that have breast

cancer."

Seventy-five per cent of all mental illnesses begin in childhood/adolescence, he said. Though mental illness is a common problem in society, many people don't immediately seek treatment, if at all, due to the stigma attached, Katsos said.

"Only 25% of children get the help they need and

deserve because of the stigma."

People often associate words such as violent, unemployed and dangerous with mental health issues, said Katsos, who hopes to break

"the stigma" and help people with mental illness ... we just don't know who we know them because they're holding in their issues." Pathstone is

launching an anti-stigma campaign later this year, Katsos said, to encourage people to reach out and get the help they need.

The campaign will be advertised in a variety of ways throughout the

"You can help by speaking about mental illness," he told council.

Last year, Pathstone was able to assist about 4,300 children — a number that is expected to grow to 5,000 in 2011, Katsos said.

For more information, visit www.pathstonementalhealth.ca.

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■ DOWNTOWN: CIP approved

New life soon for 'tired looking area'

MARYANNIE FIRTH
InPort News Staff

PORT COBORNE — The much-needed facelift in Port Colborne's downtown core is one step closer to fruition.

City council has approved the creation of a detailed streetscape design for the Downtown Community Improvement Plan, a job that will be taken on by design consultant Aecon.

The downtown CIP was adopted by council in September 2010 and the request for proposal for the streetscape design was issued this past January.

Six proposals were received, reviewed and scored by the city's engineering and planning staff, with Aecon recommended to receive the contract.

Of the top three scoring proposals, Aecon's offered the lowest bid.

Though the company's bid for the overall design of the project was \$297,057, staff recommended at last week's council

meeting that an agreement be struck to design the principle and secondary area streetscapes found within the CIP at a cost of \$199,707 — excluding site servicing until funding is confirmed.

To begin the preparation of the detailed design drawings, council budgeted \$100,000 for 2010. Those funds were matched by a grant secured by the city from South Niagara Futures Development Corp.

That \$200,000 is enough to fund the complete set of renderings and documents for both the principle and secondary area streetscapes found within the CIP project, said Mayor Vance Badaway.

He assured the city would be working with the Downtown Port Colborne Business Improvement Area board and downtown business owners as the project gets rolling.

"I can hear the dancing downtown right now for this," said Ward 1 Coun. Dave Eller.

Eller, council's representative on the downtown BIA board, said rejuvenating downtown "will be an economic driver for the city."

"This is a budget item, but not a new ask."

Council approved that addi-

tional funding be referred to the 2011 water and wastewater budget deliberations as well as the 2011 operating budget deliberations.

The recommendation is that all be done of the design in 2011. Hampered by what he hopes to get the CIP "up and ready to go" by the end of the year.

Similar to the Main St. CIP, the city is taking a "tired looking area" and bringing it back to life — this time in Port Colborne's downtown, said Mayor Vance Badaway.

He assured the city would be working with the Downtown Port Colborne Business Improvement Area board and downtown business owners as the project gets rolling.

"I can hear the dancing downtown right now for this," said Ward 1 Coun. Dave Eller.

Eller, council's representative on the downtown BIA board, said rejuvenating downtown "will be an economic driver for the city."

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■ YOGA TIME



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photos

Nadia Esposito led a yoga class for four- to seven-year-old children at Port Colborne Public Library Friday morning. The class was part of March Break activities put on by the library.



■ MARINERS CELEBRATION: Annual event before shipping season starts

Saying a prayer for sailors

DAVE JOHNSON
Tribune Staff

P O R T C O L B O R N E — Prayers were offered up for those who work in the marine industry in the city and the Great Lakes during a Mariners Celebration last Sunday night.

The celebration, at St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church, was held before the shipping season on the Welland Canal and St. Lawrence Seaway starts. The season opened Tuesday at ceremonies in both Port Colborne and St. Catharines.

"This is about the marine industry, seafarers ... people who work in the industry," said Rev. Robert Hurkmans, who welcomed approximately 50 people to the celebration.

Before Hurkmans offered a prayer for those in the marine industry, bagpiper Terry Dyson played outside the church and dancer Christie Boychuk performed The Sailors' Hornpipe dance. Also performing were the Ancient Mariners and a collection of glee clubs and various church choirs in Port Colborne and Wainfleet.

Drew Bell, of Lower Lakes

Towing, a shipping company based in Port Dover, explained what various flags hung around the church, on Charlotte St., meant.

One hung right above the altar area spelled out, "seamorse, in God We Trust."

Bell also pointed out various shipping company and charter flags, like Fraser Marine, the former Misser Transportation company and the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corps. old flag.

Port Colborne wouldn't be Port Colborne if it wasn't for the Seaway," said Bell.

Mayor Vance Badaway,

whose family has a connection to the marine industry as well through its supply company, also spoke at the celebration and agreed with Bell.

"Port Colborne is a port, we are the port of Niagara, it's how we came to be and who we are."

He thanked everyone

for coming out, including Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs and her family, and said the celebration family was a tradition in the lakeside city, held to send sailors off with a blessing.

"You have someone you know that's going to be out there on the lake this upcoming shipping season. It's important for them to know

how much you think of them on a daily basis."

Badaway said the event Sunday night helps celebrate the city's marine heritage and it's future related to the marine industry.

"Keep the folks out there in mind."

The marine industry, he said, is one of the most

prominent industries in Niagara and can be one of the most dangerous, especially with the weather on Lake Erie and all of the Great Lakes.

"So please, throughout the season, keep those folks in your thoughts."

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Vance Badaway

MAYOR'S COLUMN

depressed looking areas of our community.

This and past councils have felt that a 'do nothing' alternative is simply not an option for a community that is striving to offer more for our business sector.

Since 2003 we have offered 'Smarter Niagara' incentive programs that encouraged development of certain types in certain locations. Under provincial legislation, financial incentives can only be accessed by our business community through the establishment of a CIP if a business is within a CIP area they are entitled to financial incentives, as well as taking advantage of area specific improvements.

These CIP's are also focusing on areas of the community, bringing back into productivity old, stagnant industrial areas of the city that currently have infrastructure capacities.

The government of Ontario has specifically identified the city as the location of a Gateway Economic Centre - the only such designation in the province.

The city, union and provincial governments recognized that there is a need to steer the economy in a direction which favours our strengths in terms of our location as a gateway for trade, such as Port Colborne's significant transport infrastructure. We now need the federal government's recognition as well by establishing a Foreign Trade Zone within the gateway economic centre. These are specifically designed with tax incentives for business operations. We are currently

This and past councils have felt that a 'do nothing' alternative is simply not an option for a community that is striving to offer more for our business sector."

in discussions with the federal government on this initiative.

The gateway economic centre strategy is a major component of the region's overall economic plan. Prioritizing our life "plans into action" has been our focus in 2010 and will continue through 2011.

A number of themes where action has been taken or is in process include transportation and transit improvements, brownfield and downtown revitalization - including improvements to parks, commercial and industrial land development, attraction of new investment in key sectors, the key role of agriculture and culture in our economy, strengthening our key tourism sector and targeting incentive programs.

We have highlighted to upper levels of government the importance of local work being undertaken in support of Niagara's gateway economic centre to solicit their immediate involvement, such as the South Niagara East-West Arterial Corridor, the first link of the mid-peninsula trade corridor, transportation related studies including assessment of municipal and regional transit needs, the completion of the Niagara study, planned infrastructure and an ongoing effort highlighting the broader provincial and

federal economic benefits to a successful gateway economic centre in Niagara and establishing an industrial to the gateway economic centre which will offer financial incentives to existing and new industry that are looking at this area to locate.

The introduction of GO service in Niagara has been important for improving access for visitors. Once visitors from all over the province and beyond arrive, we need to make it easy for them to get around this region, going to attractions/destinations that are spread across Niagara, such as here in the City of Port Colborne - Niagara's South Coast - hence the need for intermunicipal transit.

Simply put, we are expanding our market exposure and must be prepared to offer a quality destination for people to live, visit, work and play. The point is, we are no longer a destination of 18,000 (Port Colborne) - we are a destination of 427,000 (Niagara).

Regional transit authorities are working together to make improvements to regional transit networks. We have begun to implement improvements which will enhance the current system(s), such as the triangle inter-municipal service (St.

Catharines, Niagara Falls, Welland) that enhances the transportation of people to the feeder areas such as to Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

This will as well add to the ability for those residing in Niagara to travel throughout the region, accessing work, healthcare and education destinations.

Along with the growth management strategy, the city is moving forward to establish a centre of excellence integrated multi-modal assets (road, rail, marine and air) and a major area through which cross border traffic and goods movement continues to grow.

This centre of excellence align well with existing road and rail initiatives in the United States such as the New York State Rail Plan and the Canada - U.S. Road Corridor (Toronto to Hamilton) and is targeting priority sectors such as wind energy manufacturing, bio-fuel, bio-food, food processing, steel and metal manufacturing and fabricating. These priority sectors will strengthen our supply chain.

Smart spending on infrastructure based on taxation will be a key in providing effective connections with global markets. Transportation dollars should be spent efficiently and effectively, according to investment priority with an overall goal to strengthen exportation, especially with the region's close proximity to North American markets, thus, the immediate construction of a mid-peninsula trade corridor is critical.

In September 2010, the Brookings Institution released a report entitled The Next Economy: Economic Recovery and Transformation in the Great Lakes region. This report leans heavily toward everything we have been working toward as mentioned earlier, including the fact that we must work together to right-size communities targeted within the region's growth corridor, such as Port Colborne, particularly for older industrial cities within the Great Lakes region which have seen significant job and population loss.

Focus should be given to stronger, smaller communities and to strategies that address long term land use and economic development.

Promoting a focus on expanding these economic opportunities is clearly outlined as a strategic opportunity within the gateway economic centre and growth strategies.

Promoting an all inclusive process, that includes all of Niagara is critical to our success at implementing these growth strategies. The city will be a beneficiary of this direction.

We must think about the economic future of all Niagara, not just a few, in turn confirming our effort to speak and work as one Niagara voice toward a successful economic recovery.

The opportunity is now, we must grasp it. Port Colborne-Niagara's economic recovery and therefore, economic sustainability depends on it.

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■ QUICK LOOK: 2012 Volkswagen Jetta GLI

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JOE DUARTE
QMI Agency

The Volkswagen Jetta GLI is back for 2012 with the newly evolved Jetta body and the promise of greater differentiation from everyday Jetta models.

Jetta was developed for the North American market back

in 1979, primarily because the Golf wasn't as successful in North America as Volkswagen hoped. The intention was to graft a trunk onto the Golf hatchback, and the car proved popular in various world markets under various names.

And since Golf had a high-performance GTI model, Volkswagen decided to create

a Jetta GLI model to match. Visually, the GLI is distinguished by horizontal character lines spanning the grille and trapezoidal headlights. The lower bumper features large air intakes and a tray-shaped front spoiler. The crease from the grille sides to the A pillars provides muscular shoulders to the front end, with their

bulging lines stretching clear to the fenders to show off their muscularity. At the rear, LED taillights sit above the dual exhausts.

It always included sporty touches, and in the latest generation that includes the 200-hp 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine (making 207 lb.-ft. of torque at just

1700 rpm) linked to a six-speed manual transmission (or optional direct shift "DSG" with paddle shifters and no manual downshifts).

Traction control, stability control and anti-lock brakes with electronic brake force distribution are all part of the package.

Handling is entrusted to a

track tuned suspension made up of front McPherson struts and rear multi-link suspensions.

Inside, there's a fast-paced, modernized multi-function steering wheel, bright alloy pedals and a leather and wood trim, and heated front sport bucket seats.

It's all tied together with the typical GTI red stitching to add an upscale sporting flare.

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MUSIC



DAVE JOHNSON Staff Photo

Music for Peace's Brianna Irvine is interviewed by broadcasting students from Niagara College before the start of a free concert at The Hub on Saturday in Port Colborne.

Event helps local charities

FROM PAGE 19

A few of the bands she had booked for the event had also dropped out and she wasn't sure why.

Music for Peace was created in January 2010 by Irvine to help three charities. The ones it helps include: Ronald McDonald House, Make a Wish Foundation and To Write Love On Her Arms, a group that deals with self-harm, depression, suicide and addiction.

Last year, through the sale of various merchandise and a concert, Irvine was able to raise and donate \$908.79 to the charities.

Though final figures weren't in, she figures more than \$200 was raised. Two cardboard boxes and a bag were also filled with non-perishable food items that concertgoers brought in, which will be donated to the food bank.

Irvine isn't planning on holding any concerts for a bit and is planning something for Canal Days this year at H.H. Knoll Lakesview Park.

"It hasn't been confirmed yet, it's just being planned," she said.

During Saturday's event, Music for Peace had 20 prizes donated to it to be drawn that night.

Prizes were provided by Lorraine Terriere, Amanda Finlay-Sellman, Creek Beach Tattoo, Jen Adams (massage gift cert), Smith Optical, and Music for Peace donated a hoodie jacket. Some of the bigger winners were Brianne Lidstone (lead singer for The Autumn Crush) who won the tattoo gift certificate, Allison Windsor who won two massage gift certificates, and Amanda Finlay-Sellman who won an \$80 pair of ladies sunglasses.



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